

BOARD OF REGENTS FOR ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

MINUTES

MEETING HELD AT:

John F. Horgan Elementary School
124 Providence Street
West Warwick, RI 02893

Thursday, March 4, 2010 5:00 p.m.

Attending: R. Flanders, P. Guida, B. Shimberg, A. Cano-Morales, K. Forbes, C. Callahan, A. Davis

The meeting convened at 5:00 p.m.

Commissioner's Report

a. Local 2012 Contract

Commissioner Gist thanked the West Warwick Superintendent, School Committee members, and Horgan Elementary School Principal for hosting the meeting. She then reported that RIDE Professional Employees Local 2012 has ratified the Collective Bargaining Agreement between local 2012, the Department of Administration, and RIDE. She thanked the 2012 employees for their cooperation.

b. CTE Regulations

The Commissioner told the members of the Board of Regents that at their next work session (on March 18) they will receive, for review, the last set of regulations governing the management and operation of area vocational-technical centers that need to be reviewed and updated. She explained that since the adoption of these Regulations, federal, state, and local education and financing conditions and practices have changed measurably and the Regulations have not kept pace with either. The next iteration of the CTE regulations will deemphasize career centers and focus on the CTE programs that meet standards.

c. Update on School for the Deaf

The Commissioner updated the Board on the School for the Deaf, as follows:

- 7 of the 9 Board of Trustees (BOT) positions are filled. One hearing vacancy and one deaf or hard-of-hearing vacancy remain.
- The BOT has participated in 5 hours of training thus far. BOT has been assigned a mentor from the Executive Board of RIASC – Scott Mueller.
- A personnel audit of files at RISDeaf conducted under the auspices of Title IIA revealed inconsistencies among certifications, qualifications, and teaching assignments.
- There was an official letter sent under the Commissioner's signature notifying Director Dunsmore to develop a plan to reconcile discrepancies by June 1, 2010.
- As a first step, Director Dunsmore, in consultation with Ken Swanson and Paulajo Gaines, recommended to the Board of Trustees that all staff members receive notification of layoff.
- At the February 23, 2010, BOT meeting, the Board arrived at a consensus to accept Director Dunsmore's recommendation.

- Swanson and Gaines continue to work with RISDeaf administrative staff to develop a reconciliation plan and schedule of recalls.

Public Remarks

The following people spoke to the members of the Board on the issue of the firing of Central Falls High School teachers:

- Jay Walsh, North Kingstown teacher – Talked about school reform in the United States. “Teachers matter more than anybody else...don’t use test scores to punish teachers”;
- JoAnn Boss, Central Falls High School teacher – Work together collaboratively to improve education at Central Falls High School... the failure of Central Falls High School is as much the fault of the administration as the teachers....firing all of the teachers is “over the top”;
- Jeff Schanck, Central Falls High School Teacher – spoke to the group about the successes in the Central Falls schools and the positive relationships of teachers and students;
- Richard DiPardo, Woonsocket Teachers’ Guild – urged the Regents to work collaboratively with the Central Falls teachers;
- George McLaughlin, Central Falls High School Guidance – Both he and his wife have taught in Central Falls for 32 years...expressed his concern about public education and urged the Regents to “open your minds” so that all can reconcile;
- Debbie Fisher, Central Falls, Librarian – Spoke about her accomplishments in the district;
- Marcia Reback, RIFTHP – Thanked Superintendent Gallo and the Central Falls Teachers Union for agreeing to continue discussions and urged the Regents to include a neutral third party in those discussion. Ms. Reback also talked about the proposed funding formula. She said that she was glad that Rhode Island is talking about a funding formula, but the proposed formula has too many “losers”; she also spoke about the proposed changes to certification – requested that the Board of Regents do joint hearings with CPAB.
- Jane Sessums, President Central Falls Teacher Union – told the members of the Board that the Central Falls teachers had, through negotiations, agreed to many education reforms – additional professional-development time, common planning time, advisories, teacher-leader positions, jumpstart academy... urged the Regents to direct Commissioner Gist to support the Transformation model;
- Kelly Erinakes, President Coventry Teachers’ Alliance – talked about the accomplishments at Central Falls High School and urged the Regents not to link student assessments to performance;
- Teresa Agoria, Central Falls High School graduate – spoke to the group about all the positive things happening in the Central Falls school district/high school;
- James Ginolfi, President, Warwick Teachers’ Union – spoke to the group about education “partnership” – what it takes to educate a child....district administration, teacher, child, and parent. Mr. Ginolfi said that the missing piece in Central Falls is the parent...;
- Mary Ryan, parent – said that the Central Falls situation is an “embarrassment”... is concerned about requiring more time in schools... asked that the Commissioner meet with the teachers;
- John Boswon, Central Falls High School graduate, urged the Regents to “...do the right thing”;

- Monica Teixeira-DaSousa, Assistant Professor, New England School of Law, Boston, and a graduate of the Pawtucket school district, told the Regents that research on the school Turnaround model says it is ineffective. She said that, if it is implemented, Central Falls will not be able to attract highly qualified staff to replace the teachers who were fired.

Other comments from the public were as follows:

- Lt. Governor Elizabeth Roberts – thanked the Regents for the proposed funding formula – a “fair and equitable distribution of funds for public schools.” She also congratulated the Commissioner and Regents for their selection as a finalist for the Race to the Top.
- Anita McGuire-Forcier, Woonsocket teacher – Congratulated the Commissioner and Regents on Race to the Top and then addressed concerns about the proposed funding formula. She said that she does not believe that the state legislature will really fund education fairly and equitably and that special-needs students and English-language learners in her community are not given the same opportunities as students in other districts.
- Julie Nora, League of Charter Schools, spoke to the Regents about the proposed funding formula. She said that she supports the basic principles of the proposed formula; however, she has reservations about the districts’ maintaining the responsibility for distributing the funds to the charter schools. She asked that the Regents/RIDE support the Charter School bill, which gives funding directly to the charter schools.
- Barry Ricci, Superintendent, Chariho – told the members of the Board that, in the proposed funding formula, Chariho students are the losers because of the loss of the regionalization incentive. He asked that the district be held harmless.
- Sam Zurier and Korina Wood, Providence parents – addressed the Board on the proposed funding formula. They told the Board members that they “applaud” their work on the guiding principles adopted earlier in the year, but question the loss of funding to some of the state’s poorest districts.
- Melinda Thies, Superintendent, Bristol Warren Regional School District – commended the Commissioner and department for their work on the proposed funding formula. She told the Board that she agrees that Rhode Island needs to have a fair funding formula; however, the formula proposed would mean that Bristol Warren would lose \$9.1 million over the next ten years because of the loss of the regionalization bonus. She asked that the Regents reconsider this proposal.
- Dennis Litkey, Metropolitan Career and Technical School – asked that the Regents reconsider the funding of Career and Technical schools.
- Robert Mayne, Chariho Teacher and graduate and NEA Chariho President – spoke to the group about the funding formula. He expressed his concern about the cuts to the Chariho district. He said that it will “devastate” Chariho.

Chairman’s Remarks

Chairman Flanders thanked the West Warwick School Committee and Superintendent for hosting the meeting and all of the teachers and community members for coming to speak to the Board of Regents.

Mr. Flanders then asked that the meeting recess for ten minutes. There were no objections.

The meeting reconvened to open session at 7:10 p.m.

Approval of Minutes of the Board of Regents Meeting of February 4, 2010; February 4, 2010, Executive Session; and February 25, 2010, Work Session

MOVED AND SECONDED: THAT, the Rhode Island Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education Approve the Minutes of the Board of Regents Meeting of February 4, 2010; February 4, 2010 Executive Session; and February 25, 2010 Work Session.

VOTE: Approved Unanimously.

Endorsement of Education Funding Formula

Commissioner Gist reminded the members of the Board that in November 2009 the Board of Regents charged the Department of Education with developing specific calculations for an education-aid funding-formula proposal that could be introduced during this legislative session. RIDE partnered with Dr. Kenneth Wong, Education Department Chair at Brown University, and his team of graduate students, who provided technical assistance for the development of a research-based, data-driven methodology for distributing education aid. The proposal being presented is aligned to the Regents' Funding Formula Guiding Principles, incorporates empirical research, and applies equitably to all public schools and school districts with a "money follows the student" methodology. The key components of this formula-driven funding system are:

- A core-instruction amount, derived from a market basket approach, that adequately funds student instructional needs as described in the Basic Education Program (BEP);
- A student-success factor that provides additional funding to support student needs beyond the core services with the ultimate goal of closing student achievement gaps;
- A state-share ratio that considers a district's revenue-generating capacity and concentration of at-risk students; and
- Categorical funding outside the formula distribution for high-cost special education, start-up and maintenance of high-cost career and technical programs, early childhood programs, and state stabilization funds for Central Falls Public Schools.

The Regents talked about next steps and the impact of the proposal on the districts. Regent Callahan expressed her concern that the proposed formula does not specifically address the funding of professional development and special education.

MOVED AND SECONDED: THAT, the Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education Endorses and Transmits the Proposed Calculations for an Education Aid Funding Formula to interested stakeholders, as attached.

VOTE: Approved Unanimously.

Approval of Certification Redesign, for public hearing

Commissioner Gist told the group that, as per the discussion at the Regents February 25 work session, in order to move to a performance-based licensure-renewal system that will have a more direct impact on student achievement, we must stop renewing certificates under IPlan regulations and temporarily issue one-year, rather than five-year, professional certificates while the components for licensure renewal are redesigned.

Educators with certificates that expire by August 31, 2010, will be required to close out their IPlans—completing all requirements under current regulations-- and will be issued a 5-year certificate. These educators will not have any renewal requirements; they will enter the new evaluation-based renewal system in 2015. Educators with certificates that expire by August 31, 2010, who do not close out their IPlans will be issued a one-year professional transitional certificate and will become part of the first cohort of the new evaluation-based renewal system.

Educators who are converting their CEEs beginning September 1, 2010, will be issued a one-year professional transitional certificate; as of January 1, 2011, any educator with an expiring five-year professional certificate will be issued a one-year professional transitional certificate. The one-year professional transitional certificate does not have any renewal requirements other than the submission of an application and fee. Fees for the one-year professional transitional certificate and applicable endorsements will be prorated. (one year professional transitional certificate \$40; endorsement \$5).

MOVED AND SECONDED: THAT, the Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education Approve, for the Purpose of Joint Public Hearing with CPAB, the Transitional Renewal Process and Establish a One-Year Professional Transitional Certificate, as presented.

VOTE: Approved Unanimously. [Regent Davis abstained from the Motion]

Budget/Legislative Update

Commissioner Gist reported that during the week she had testified at the House and Senate Finance Committee budget hearings and had testified on the lift of the Charter School caps.

Adjournment: With unanimous consent, the meeting adjourned at 7:55 p.m.